

and (2) '*Hystrix chrysuros* Lin Gmel.'=*Myoxus chrysurus* Zimm. Therefore *Loncheres*, when founded, was virtually monotypic, with *Loncheres chrysurus* (Zimm.) type by monotypy.

In my paper published in 1899 (*l. c.*) all the details of the two cases of *Echinys* and *Loncheres* were fully presented, and interested readers are referred to that paper for their fuller history.

—J. A. Allen.

THE TYPE SPECIES OF RATTUS.

In a late paper,* Mr. Oldfield Thomas calls attention to my recent statement† that *Mus decumanus* (= *Rattus norvegicus*) is the type species of *Rattus* Fischer, 1803,‡ and decides that the type of that genus is *Mus rattus*. The question is just now one of more than usual importance. In view of the standard set for murine genera by Mr. Thomas in recent work on African mammals, it is highly desirable that the type species of *Rattus* be determined beyond doubt, for the Norway and black rats represent groups as much entitled to generic rank as many sections of murine genera recently given distinctive names. Whatever the final decision on the case, the proposal of Mr. Thomas seems to be far from satisfactory.

The most simple way out obviously would be to accept *Rattus* from its original publication alone, the type species to be *Mus decumanus* by monotypy. As Mr. Thomas, in another connection, has recently put it:§ "We have not to deal with what Cuvier [in this case Fischer] meant to do, but with what he did do," and he certainly published the Latin name *Rattus* as a new generic name and mentioned by name only one species, *Mus decumanus*. The case in that respect is very different from that of *Rattus* Donovan, 1827,|| because Donovan actually mentioned *Mus rattus* in his description of the new species of the "rat tribe" *Rattus donovani*,¶ while Fischer lists the single species *decumanus* in exactly the way we nowadays mention a representative or type species.

Mr. Thomas argues that [although only a single species, *Mus decumanus*, is included by name in the genus by Fischer] the "genus is distinctly made for the 'Ratte,' French 'Rat,'=*Mus rattus*, the mention of *Mus decumanus* being merely as 'the most remarkable of the other species.'" This translation of Fischer is in itself misleading. What Fischer, who was describing the mammal gallery in the Paris museum, really says is: "Die merkwürdigste unter andern Gattungen dieses Geschlechts ist die Wanderratte (*rat surmulot; Mus decumanus*)"—that is, among the different species of this genus [on exhibition] the most remarkable is *Mus decumanus*. The case of *Troglodytes*, in ornithology, is in some respects similar to the case of *Rattus*. Vieillot, in describing some American wrens, proposed the new generic name *Trog-*

* Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., Ser. 8. Vol. 18, p. 240. August, 1916.

† Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, Vol. 29, p. 126. June 6, 1916.

‡ Nationalmuseum der Naturgeschichte zu Paris, Vol. 2, p. 128. 1803.

§ Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, Vol. 28, p. 181. November 29, 1915.

|| See Hollister, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, Vol. 29, p. 126. 1916.

¶ Nat. Repos., Vol. 3, text to pl. 73, 1834 [1827].

lodytes.* It is plain that he intended to include within it the old world *Motacilla troglodytes*, but as he did not actually mention the technical specific name of that species anywhere in his text, the committees of both the American and the British Ornithologists' Unions agree that *T. aedon*, later selected from the mentioned American species, and not *Motacilla troglodytes*, stands as the type.

Fischer's chapter on the mammal collection in Paris is largely a translation of Lacepède's "Tableau," with the addition under each genus of the German name of the animals, and frequently with a complete sentence to introduce the name of the most remarkable, characteristic, or typical species on exhibition; rather than to list one such species in Lacepède's systematic, tabular manner. In case we can not accept *decumanus* as the type of Fischer's *Rattus* solely on the ground that it is the only species mentioned, we may consider the *Rattus* of Fischer simply a new name for the *Mus* of Lacepède. This is the sole instance where Fischer changed a generic name in his translation of Lacepède. He probably did it because he considered the Medieval Latin noun *Rattus* a much more appropriate generic name for the rats than the classical *Mus*, which was used by the ancients for almost any small mammal, including even the ermine and other carnivores. There is no reason to suppose that he was specially thinking of the German "Ratte" or French "rat" in this connection, as suggested by Thomas; if so there was abundant opportunity to change other generic names in the same manner, and he would have been much more likely to mention the "rat noir" as his example than the "rat surmulot."

Now in settling a technical case of this kind by rule, it seems to me that we must not arbitrarily assume that Lacepède's *Mus* is the *Mus* of Linnæus (type *M. musculus*) whatever we may honestly believe to be the actual truth. Lacepède listed only one species, and that in almost as formal a manner as did later authors like Gray and Fleming who actually "fixed" the types of so many genera. The species listed, *Mus decumanus*, was unknown to Linnæus; Lacepède does not cite Linnæus in any place; and his "system" is wholly different from the "Systema Naturæ." There is no actual evidence to prove that had he listed *Mus musculus* at all, it would not have been in some other of his genera which are divisions of the original *Mus* of Linnæus. The type species of the *Mus* of Lacepède, then, for this purpose, must be *Mus decumanus*, and this species must automatically become the type of Fischer's substitute generic name *Rattus*.

Had Fischer definitely indicated that his *Rattus* was a substitute name for the *Mus* of Lacepède, and if Lacepède had cited Linnæus or even Erxleben as the authority for his *Mus*, we would instantly dispose of *Rattus* as a synonym of the *Mus* of Linnæus. In the absence of the necessary references to treat the case in this manner, it seems to me that we must accept *Rattus* as the generic name of the rats, with *decumanus* (*norvegicus*) as the type species. The name *Epimys* (type *Mus rattus*)† is then available for those who care to separate the *alexandrinus-rattus* group from true *Rattus*.

—N. Hollister.

* Ois. Amer. Sept., Vol. 2, p. 52. 1807.

† See Miller, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, Vol. 23, p. 58. April 19, 1910.